

Young men need not only to be brought into the school, but they need to be made to feel at home after they are there. Some may have no idea of what little things sometimes drive away one who has dropped in for a visit. Strangers are too often treated as curiosities instead of receiving the warm welcome that would make them feel that they were among friends. There is nothing that appeals to one so strongly as home and for this reason the Sunday school should be homelike. And if it is a home its prevailing spirit will be that which alone can make a home, namely, love. If this spirit prevails there will be no cold formalities or any of the things that characterize a dead school, but there will be a continual manifestation of mutual interest and sympathy. This is the atmosphere which must surround the stranger when he happens to drop in if we would have him leave with a desire to come again. We should be careful not to miss these opportunities to add new workers to our number.

Now there is another fact which presents a problem for the Sunday school, and which should appeal to us more strongly than any we have yet mentioned. If we will look over the numbers that make up our schools we will see in the primary and lower classes large numbers of boys. Primary classes are nearly always crowded to overflowing. Why is it then that our young men's classes are so small? What becomes of all those boys who make up the primary classes? All other things being equal, it would seem that they should grow up thru the various classes with the result that our young men's classes would be a great deal larger than they are in most schools. But the fact remains that many of them never reach the young men's class, which fact can only be explained by concluding that there must be a falling out somewhere. This would bring us to the conclusion that the school, for some reason or other, is unable to hold a part of her membership, especially her boys. Now this conclusion confronts the Sunday school with the question, where does the fault lie? Who is responsible for the boys who start out in our Sunday schools and sooner or later fall away, thus severing themselves from the influence of the Sunday school just at the time when they need this influence to guide them safely over that most critical period of life, —the period between youth and manhood? Here we must again lay some of the blame upon the parents who, as their boys grow up, gradually lose control over them and allow them to wander into the highways of sin and vice just because they are freed from the restraint of parental authority. These parents are no doubt responsible to a considerable extent for this condition, but I believe that the greatest responsibility lies with the Sunday school. Thru some fault of the school the child is not interested and consequently is lost. Now I admit that there are some children who could not be interested by anything short of an ideally perfect school; and I do not expect, or even hope, to have the

Sunday school reach this state of ideal perfection; but I do believe that it is possible for the school to make such improvement as will enable it to hold a great many that it would lose under its present state of efficiency. Now what are some of the reasons why the Sunday school fails to hold the interest of many of her members?

One reason, I believe, why the Sunday school is often uninteresting is the fact that in so many cases the work is very unsystematic and aimless. The work merely goes on Sunday after Sunday in a kind of mechanical way without reference to any particular end toward which the school is working. True, we have the international lessons prepared by competent men and arranged for a systematic study of the Bible; but the school fails to make the proper use of these helps. Lesson helps are necessary but they should be used only as *helps* and should not be regarded as a substitute for original work. Now this brings us to another reason for a lack of interest in the Sunday school work, namely, inefficient teachers.

The teacher is the life of the school; or, as the educational maxim has it, "As the teacher is, so is the school." To make Sunday school work interesting, a teacher must be original. Here is where we find many of our teachers weak. Too many of them are mere machines, or "crank turners" as they are sometimes called. They ask the questions given in the lesson helps and expect the pupils to answer them, thus taking the class thru a process that is very much the same each Sunday. How long will it take for this kind of a process to become monotonous? It is a wonder that the pupils think the lessons dry and uninteresting when they are being taught as it were by machinery? The teacher who interests his class is more than a machine. He is no slave to the quarterly, but has a store of original ideas to draw from. He sees a world of meaning in every verse and makes every sentence glow with life. He does not only study his lessons but he studies his pupils and tries to minister to the peculiar need of each. Now many teachers fail to fulfill some of these conditions because they have no interest in their classes. The superintendent prevails on them and they reluctantly take the class because there is no one else to do it. Such a teacher will fail for a lack of sympathy between his pupils and himself. Pupils will respond to the sympathy of a teacher, but as this teacher feels no interest in his class as a whole, much less in the individuals, the class is dead. Can we then blame pupils who drop out from this class? We cannot expect them to come Sunday after Sunday when they are not being fed, or at best are being fed upon husks.

Again, a teacher in order to hold his class, must teach them by example as well as by precept. He must aim to follow out in his own life the principles that he lays down for them. The young are very quick to detect hypocrisy, and when they once detect it in a teacher his good influence over them ceases.

A teacher cannot successfully teach his pupils punctuality when he himself frequently comes in late. He cannot teach them regularity when he leaves them a large part of the time in charge of a substitute. He will hardly succeed in getting them to study the lesson when he comes before them every now and then with the confession that he knows nothing about it. "Practice what you preach," should be an ever present maxim in the mind of every Sunday school teacher.

We might go on and show many other ways in which the teacher, by carelessness or neglect, becomes responsible for the loss of pupils, but I believe that enough has been said along this line.

You will notice that I have divided the young men who are not in the Sunday school into two great classes: those who were never in and those who have been in but have been lost. And then I have placed the responsibility for this condition upon two parties: the parents and the school. I take this position because I believe, in the first place, that the world has a right to expect Christian parents to rear Christian children, and in the second place that the Sunday school has not done all she could have done to increase her numbers and to hold those whom she already had.

In preparing this paper I may at times have apparently wandered from my subject, but I believe that all I have said bears either directly or indirectly upon it.

I leave these few thoughts in the hope that they may throw at least a ray of light upon the subject under consideration, and that they may contribute a mite toward increasing the interest and enlarging the influence of our schools.

The Christian Life

PRAYER MEETING TOPIC

BIBLICAL BAPTISM

I. *John's. Matt. 3:5-12.*

1. For repentance and remission of sins, Mk. 1:4, 5.
2. For the purpose of revealing the Christ, John 1:31-33.

3. Reason of Christ's submission to it, Matt. 3:15.

II. *Christian Baptism.*

1. An ordinance of the church, Mk. 16:15, 16.
2. To be done in water, Acts 8:36.
3. Necessary to salvation, John 3:5; Acts 3:28.
4. A sign of spiritual cleansing, Acts 22:16.
5. There is only one, Eph. 4:5.
6. Confession of sins must precede, Matt. 3:6.
7. Repentance of sins must precede, Acts 2:38.
8. Faith necessary to, Acts 8:37; 18:8.
9. A sign of our being dead to our former life, Rom. 6:3.
10. The sign of the answer of a good conscience, 1 Peter 3:18, 21.

III. *Remarks.*

- a. John's baptism was different from Christ's, Acts 19:1-5.
- b. Baptism itself cannot save us, only what it signifies, but we cannot be saved without it.

Secret of a Noble Life

Christian Advocate.

Christ did not come into the world to take away life, but to give life. It is not the object of Christianity to make life bitter; as some seem to think, but to take the bitter-